

15. Training/Information/Education

15.1 Introduction

Forest practices rules require DNR to “conduct a continuing program of orientation and training, relating to forest practices and rules thereof, pursuant to RCW 76.09.250” (WAC 222-08-141). DNR conducts ongoing training programs to educate internal agency staff, forest landowners and staff from cooperating agencies and organizations on forest practices rule implementation.

There are four major venues in which the Forest Practices program provides training:

- Washington Contract Loggers Association (WCLA) training
- Forest Practices program training
- Subject-based training
- Region training

15.2 Status of Forest Practices Training Programs

Due to budget constraints the program no longer has a Training Manager to implement a training program for staff as well as stakeholders. Some training is still ongoing although on a much smaller scale, such as unstable slopes, Channel Migration Zones, and wetlands – these are provided on an as-needed basis.

The forest practices program is working on convening a stakeholder group to address training needs for staff and stakeholders, as well as a strategy for implementation beginning sometime in 2011.

Washington Contract Logger Association Training

Staff was unable to participate in the April 2010 Washington Contract Logger Association training due to budget reductions. The Association offers a five-day training course to participants, which includes one day of forest practices rules training for operators seeking state certification. This course is generally offered twice a year. Program staff cover water typing, riparian and wetland management zones, cultural resources, road maintenance, enforcement, and general information regarding the forest practices application/notification process. The program has committed to continuing participation in this training program beginning again in December 2010.

Forest Practices Program Training

Budget constraints have affected the magnitude of forest practices programmatic training over the past year, however, where possible, training occurred. Less costly forums were sought for needed training. For example, HCP Administrators provided training, as needed, through regularly scheduled meetings with region staff and one-on-one responses to questions via phone and email.

Training sessions were provided to each of the regions as a result of SHB 2935 being signed into law during the 2010 legislature. The new law had an effect on department decisions and their

appeal process. A total of 43 people participated. The sessions focused on the changes to RCW 76.09, updates to agency used forms, updates to staff procedures and program guidelines.

Some formal training took place during regularly scheduled Operations meetings. The meetings are held twice a year between division staff and region Forest Practices management staff to share information, address program concerns and answer questions. One such training addressed the Clean Water Act Assurances and was provided to staff by the Department of Ecology and the Forest Practices Division. The review provided background on the Clean Water Act and its relationship with the forest practices rules and discussed the 2009 Clean Water Act Assurance milestones. The AAG office provided training to staff regarding the process of building a strong legal case.

The Compliance Monitoring program provides training for DNR, Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and tribal field staff who participate in onsite review of completed forest practices applications. The training is specifically focused on the protocols used to collect Compliance Monitoring data. Protocols, which are updated periodically to reflect design changes, are reviewed to insure understanding of procedures and their purpose, usually in the context of meetings. “On the Job” training is done using experienced staff to promote consistency in observations from newer program participants.

The Information Technology section provided two primary trainings this fiscal year. New Northern Spotted Owl Habitat data layers were added to the Forest Practices Risk Assessment Tool. The new habitat layers can be used to calculate the available habitat for any given northern spotted owl median home range circle. Half-day training sessions were provided in September and October 2009 for 21 Forest Practices region staff explaining the calculation steps and providing documentation. In early 2010 we realized that the backlog of water type modification forms waiting to be entered into the DNR Hydrography GIS dataset was growing. To address this issue, DNR developed training materials and conducted training on how to update the Hydrography dataset using Arc/Info software. DNR now have six additional GIS analysts trained in the procedures for entering water type updates.

Subject-Based Training

Currently, Forest Practices Program scientists provide training for unstable slopes identification, Channel Migration Zone identification, and wetlands identification. These are two-day courses with one day in the classroom and the other in the field. During this reporting period, unstable slopes training and wetlands training were offered twice, and Channel Migration Zone training was offered three times.

Unstable Slopes

Unstable slopes training included the following participants:

- DNR staff – new Forest Practices and State Lands foresters, Stewardship coordinators, Small Forest Landowner foresters, engineers, geologists, and research technicians
- Other public agency foresters, biologists, and engineers—Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Revenue, and Mason County
- Industry and Tribal foresters, biologists, and engineers—Green Diamond, Weyerhaeuser, Hancock, Olympic Resource Management, and Quinault Tribe

The objectives of unstable slopes training is to improve recognition of unstable slopes and landforms, improve consistency in recognition of these features and being able to identify when a specialist is needed for further consultation.

Channel Migration Zone

The target audience for Channel Migration Zone training is DNR, industry, and other agency staff. The objectives of Channel Migration Zone training include learning about channel anatomy, and identifying significant features such as bankfull channel width, and the channel migration regulatory definition as defined by the rule. The class includes subjects such as understanding flood stage, and lateral channel movement; and aerial photo chronology to determine changes in channel morphology. Delineation of the zone is also demonstrated.

Wetlands

Basic wetland identification training has been offered for many years. Classes consist of identification of wetland vegetation for the specific region in which the training is conducted. Classroom subjects covered include wetland hydrology, soils, vegetation, and mitigation. Labs are conducted for identifying soils properties and plant associations. Field exercises cover wetland identification and delineation.

Region Training

DNR region staff generally deliver both statewide and region specific training. In addition, each region office holds regular Timber/Fish/Wildlife “cooperator” meetings as a means of communicating changes in rules, rule implementation or application processing to Forest Practices program participants. Cooperator meetings are an important mechanism to assure fair, uniform application of forest practices requirements within and among DNR’s six regions. DNR region staff also organizes informal meetings where technical or scientific information is presented as a way of keeping field practitioners informed about recent research findings.

Regions completed over 120 training presentations/meetings during FY 2010. The topics varied widely. Topics included were: Clean Water Act and milestones, watershed analysis, riparian open space program, enforcement database, water type modification, and wetlands.